

BLACK SCREEN.

We first hear the sound of papers shuffling, a long sigh, and then boots walking briskly through a hallway.

INT. ASTROPHYSICS LABORATORY — AFTERNOON (3:00 PM)

TYLER, a 20-year-old laboratory technician, walks quickly through a large research building carefully dodging two men walking towards him and out of the elevator. He catches the elevator as soon as the men exit.

CUT TO:

DAVID, a 24-year-old Ph.D. student, is presenting a paper on his research project: tracking imminent but unlikely impact events. The lecture hall is filled and David's voice carries. A man seated in the front row with judging eyes seems to notice David's every movement.

CUT TO:

TYLER exits the elevator and passes by a number of different offices and mazes his way through different corridors. He finally reaches a lab and opens the doors to find no one but the quite hum of machines.

TYLER looks around. He runs his hands across the cold back tables and turns the corner in the lab to find no one.

TYLER: Shit!

TYLER runs out of the laboratory and down the hallway. He turns the next corner to see the doors of a lecture hall. Tyler peers through the windowed doors to see David giving a presentation. The lecture hall doors open and the creek echoes through the room. TYLER sits down quietly.

DAVID: In conjunction with NASA's Near Earth Object Program, we've determined that this NEO, being only 1 of the 12,000 currently under surveillance is not potentially hazardous. It's relatively small size and its close approach distance is currently only estimated. But are there any questions?

BEN, the forty-year-old beady-eyed man in the front row, stands up from his seat.

BEN: I think we might have to cut this a bit short. Thank you David for that.

(awkward silence)

Everyone stands and begins to exit the lecture hall, while Tyler fights his way against the traffic of incoming people.

DAVID begins to gather his things and looks over to Tyler speaking with Ben. As David starts to exit he turns back.

BEN: That was a great presentation. Could we speak for a moment, David?

DAVID: Sure.

TYLER, noticing this ensuing conversation leaves the two to talk.

BEN: I've just gotten word that we've taken a large hit to our funding. Our grant application sent out a few months ago was rejected. The thing is that we need to keep pace and publish as soon as possible. The work we have now is fantastic, but your project specifically needs to start collecting more data.

DAVID: Okay. Where do we go from here?

BEN: Either pick up the pace or start eyeing down other projects. We can't afford to fall behind.

DAVID: Okay.

BEN: I'll see you on Monday.

DAVID: Monday.

DAVID walks out of the lecture hall with his hands filled with papers.